

College of Professional Studies

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Basic Information & Resources

Master's in Strategic Public Relations

Introduction to Strategic Public
Relations

Asynchronous Online

3 Credits

Instructor: Janis Teruggi Page, PhD

Dr. Janis Teruggi Page draws from 20 years of executive experience in strategic communications for regional and national media companies. She managed corporate, consumer, and media relations, creating programming partnerships with major TV networks, directing PR for national industry trade show events, supervising creative, and promoting new product launches. After earning a doctorate from Missouri School of Journalism in 2005, she began a new career path in academia. An award-winning educator, Dr. Page has taught in GWU's SPR program since 2009, is a clinical assistant professor in the Communication Department, University of Illinois at Chicago, and is a recent Fulbright Distinguished Chair scholar. She has developed and taught both undergraduate and graduate-level courses such as PR principles, writing, cases, campaigns, corporate advocacy, research, sustainability, and visual communication. Her research has appeared in the Journal of Public Interest Communication, the Journal of Public Relations Education, the Journal of Political Management, and the Handbook of Strategic Communication, among others. In addition to the textbook for this course, Janis is also a co-author of the 2022 book, *Visual Communication Insights and Strategies* (Wiley), and she is a member of PRSA, NCA, AEJMC, and ICA.

Contact Information

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Course Details

Course Description and Overview

This is a fully online, asynchronous class on Blackboard with no physical or virtual class meetings required; you will work individually to meet deadlines. This graduate course traces the history and development of Modern Public Relations, surveys the major theories that guide strategic public relations, and examines how

they are currently applied by business, government, and non-profit communications professionals. It will also introduce students to strategic communication planning and current tactics to accomplish communications objectives.

In subsequent classes in our program, you will delve into these topics in more detail. As such, this course is designed as an overview to set you up for success for the remainder of the program.

Assignments and discussions will emphasize case studies and the application of theory to provide an in-depth understanding of planning, executing, monitoring, and evaluating a strategic public relations campaign. Lectures and readings will cover key campaign components and how to measure effectiveness. The course will also detail the impact and importance of digital communications in strategic public relations activity.

Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain how the history and ethics of strategic public relations connect to modern practice.
2. Evaluate the use of strategic public relations in real-world environments and its value to clients, organizations, and society at large.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the research-planning-implementation-evaluation (RPIE) process of public relations in situational challenges and opportunities.
4. Communicate clearly and effectively in writing and oral presentations for public relations roles.

Program Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this master's program, students will have obtained an enhanced understanding and skills in:

1. Understanding the fundamentals of effective, strategic communications;
2. Applying best practices for writing, media relations and strategic communications planning and implementation;
3. Developing leadership in communications on a sound ethical and financial basis;

4. Leading the implementation of strategic communications strategies.

Required Text and Learning Materials

- Page, J. & Parnell, L. (2021). *Introduction to Public Relations: Strategic, Digital, and Socially Responsible Communications* (2nd edition). Sage Publishing.
ISBN: 978-1544392004
- Smith, R. (2013). *Strategic Planning for Public Relations* (5th edition). Routledge.
ISBN: 978-0415506762

Note: Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard on a timely basis during the semester. It is your responsibility to check Blackboard regularly to access these additional materials.

Optional Supplemental Text and Learning Materials

See Blackboard for more professional organizations and publications of interest.

The Washington Post; *The Wall Street Journal*; *Politico*; and *Fortune PR Week* are great sources for you to routinely read. You may also review the following sources for relevant information:

- The Associated Press. (2013). *Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law 2013* (46th edition). Basic Books.
ISBN: 0465082998
- [The Institute for Public Relations](#) – Offers a free website containing a wealth of research, scholarly and practice-based papers, articles and publications on current trends and practices in PR.
- [Public Relations Society of America \(PRSA\)](#) – The leading membership organization for public relations professionals globally. Offers career advice, job listings, case studies and information, thought leadership to members. Discount Student memberships are available.
- [Page Society](#) – Public pages of this site offer communications case study examples from recent competitions involving Business schools and Schools of Mass Communication and Journalism. Cases are free to members and non-members. Membership in Page is limited to senior level practitioners.

Evaluation and Grading

This course will include the following types of assessment. Descriptions of each assessment can be found on Blackboard.

Assessments will contribute toward the student's grade based on the following chart:

Assignment Category	Weight
Discussions	20%
Assignments	30%
Midterm Exam	10%
Final PR Plan (Proposal, Outline, Draft, Final)	40%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

Assignments

Weekly assessments will be in the form of online, asynchronous discussions and written assignments. All assignments will be graded according to the quality of the analysis, critical thinking, and writing demonstrated by the student.

Initial responses to discussion posts are due each Thursday by 3 am; responses to at least two peers' posts are due each Saturday by 3 am. Weekly written assignments are due the following Monday by 3:00am on Blackboard. All deadlines are Eastern time. All assignments must be turned in by their due dates. **Note: all papers are subject to review by SafeAssign to determine proper sourcing and assure original work by students.**

Formatting: Please use APA style for written assignments and citations (12pt, Times New Roman/Arial, Double-spaced font; include in-text citations and a references list). Graduate school level spelling, grammar, and composition are expected.

Late Submission Policy

Late submissions are not encouraged in this class that moves quickly within a ten-week timeframe. If you anticipate an absolutely unavoidable delay in submitting an assignment (including the Discussion Forum), you must notify both your instructional assistant and professor in advance of the deadline with an explanation for consideration. In most cases, late submissions will be marked down 10% (out of 100%), per each day late. Anything more than three (3) days late will not be accepted. Only under extenuating circumstances, with documentation, may you be granted late submission without penalty.

See Course Schedule below for timeline of discussions and assignments due each week of the course.

Tentative Course Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar. Final dates and details will be found on the Blackboard course site.

Week	Objectives	Topic	Readings & Videos	Assignments
1	1. Explain how the history and ethics of strategic public relations connect to modern practice.	Intro to Public Relations and PR History	Page & Parnell, Chs. 1 & 2 Video: PR in Popular Culture Video interview with Shelley Spector, President, Spector PR; Director, Museum of Public Relations View the Contemporary History of PR timeline	Lesson 1.1: Intro to PR Lesson 1.2: History of PR Disc: Self Introduction Disc 1: PR in Popular Culture-- Assess PR Reputation & Personal Ethics Assignment: Figure in PR History
2	3. Demonstrate an understanding of the research-planning-implementation-evaluation (RPIE)	Ethics, Research, and Theory	Page & Parnell, Chs. 3 & 4	Lesson 2.1: Ethics Lesson 2.2: Research Overview Lesson 2.3: Theory Overview Disc 2: Share Figure in PR research paper (summary)

Week	Objectives	Topic	Readings & Videos	Assignments
	process of public relations in situational challenges and opportunities			Assignment: Scenario Challenge--Desert Rose Theatre
3	2. Evaluate the use of strategic public relations in real-world environments and its value to clients, organizations, and society at large.	Strategy and Measurement	Page & Parnell, Ch. 5 Smith, Phase 2 - pp. 103-118 Goals & Objectives - pp. 133-138 CSR - pp. 155-160 Theory	Lesson 3.1: Strategy Lesson 3.2: Measurement Disc 3: Prepare for midterm Assignment: Applying PR Theory
4	3. Demonstrate an understanding of the research-planning-implementation-evaluation (RPIE) process of public relations in situational challenges and opportunities. 4. Communicate clearly and effectively in writing and oral presentations for public relations roles.	Media Relations and PR Tactics	Page & Parnell, Chs. 6 & 7 Smith, Phase3 - pp. 274-291 Owned Media - pp. 296-319 Earned Media - pp. 322-334 Paid Media	Lesson 4.1: Media Relations Lesson 4.2: Tactics Midterm Exam
5	2. Evaluate the use of strategic public relations in real-world environments and its value to clients, organizations, and society at large. 4. Communicate clearly and effectively in writing and oral	Social Media	Page & Parnell, Ch. 8	Lesson 5.1: Social Media Engagement Disc 5: Social Media and Hate Speech Assignment: Impact of Digital and Social Media on PR

Week	Objectives	Topic	Readings & Videos	Assignments
	presentations for public relations roles.			
6	2. Evaluate the use of strategic public relations in real-world environments and its value to clients, organizations, and society at large.	Crisis Communication and Issues Management	Page & Parnell, Ch. 12 Video interview with Scott Ferson, CEO, Liberty Square Group Image Repair Discourse and Crisis Communication (PDF) – William Benoit, PhD	Lesson 6.1: Issues and Crisis Management Disc 6: Examples of Corporate Social Activism Assignment: Applying Image Restoration Theory
7	3. Demonstrate an understanding of the research-planning-implementation-evaluation (RPIE) process of public relations in situational challenges and opportunities.	Corporate PR and Internal Communications	Page & Parnell, Chs. 10 & 11 Smith, Phases 1 and 4 Video interview with Joseph Tateoka, VP, Edelman	Lesson 7.1: Internal PR Disc 7: Share Image Restoration assignment (summary) Assignment: 100 th Anniversary Celebration Assignment: Final PR Plan Proposal
8	3. Demonstrate an understanding of the research-planning-implementation-evaluation (RPIE) process of public relations in situational challenges and opportunities.	CSR, Nonprofit and Health PR	Page & Parnell, Chs. 9 & 14 Podcast Mastering The Room: Anne Rancourt of NIH Video interview with Jessica Aptman, CCO, ZocDoc	Lesson 8.1: Corporate Social Responsibility Disc 8: Analyze A Nonprofit's Use of Social Media Assignment: Final PR Plan Outline
9	3. Demonstrate an understanding of the research-planning-implementation-evaluation (RPIE) process of public relations in situational	Public Affairs and Political Communication	Page & Parnell, Ch. 15 Video Interview with Andrea Hahn, PAO, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba	Lesson 9.1: Public Affairs and Political Communications Disc 9: Social Media in Political Campaigning Assignment: Final PR Plan Rough Draft

Week	Objectives	Topic	Readings & Videos	Assignments
	challenges and opportunities.			
10	<p>3. Demonstrate an understanding of the research-planning-implementation-evaluation (RPIE) process of public relations in situational challenges and opportunities.</p> <p>4. Communicate clearly and effectively in writing and oral presentations for public relations roles.</p>	Putting it all together	[No readings assigned]	<p>Disc 10: Share your Final PR Plan</p> <p>Assignment: Final PR Plan</p>

Expectations and Responsibilities

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site regularly throughout the semester to engage with weekly course content, view announcements, and submit assignments. Students can access the course site through [GWU Blackboard](#).

Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or the [IT Blackboard web page](#).

Please note that your access to this course on Blackboard will continue for one month after the course ends. If you wish to keep any work or materials, you must download or save them before the course.

Technology Requirements

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the required technology to fully participate in this course. The minimum technology requirements for learning online at GW are outlined on the [Technical Requirements and Support](#) web page.

If you have any problems with the technology in this course, you can seek technological support from GW in a variety of ways, outlined on the [IT Support](#) website.

GW is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment that is accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities.

The following links provide more information about the accessibility of technologies may be used in this course:

- [Blackboard accessibility](#)
- [Microsoft Office accessibility](#)
- [Adobe accessibility](#)
- [Vimeo accessibility](#)
- [YouTube accessibility](#)

If you have any issues regarding the accessibility of the technology used in this course, please contact your instructor. You may also explore the [Disability Support Services](#) website.

Technology Expectations

Regarding technology skills, you should be able to:

- Create documents and presentation slides
- Use a webcam and microphone
- Use a digital camera or scanner
- Upload files, including recordings and images
- Be open to learning new technologies
- Be flexible when technological glitches happen (which is a given)
- Seek technological help when necessary by contacting the Division of Information Technology

If you have any problems with the technology expectations in this course, please contact your instructor.

Getting Started

Everything you need to get started in the course is contained within the Blackboard course site. You can use the menu links on the left side panel to view different components. The content for each learning unit is divided into folders—one for each week.

Participation Policy

All students are expected to learn and contribute by being a positive participant in discussions, activities, presentations, and assignments. If you have an unavoidable conflict or become ill, in a way that will affect your participation in a given week, please notify your instructor immediately. You are invited to attend a live chat session each week with the professor via WebEx. This is optional.

Grading Scale

Following is the grade scale for all CPS classes:

Grade	Range	Grade Standard
A	94-100	Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.
A-	90-93	Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.
B+	87-89	Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.
B	83-86	Good work, but needs reworking and more effort.
B-	80-82	You've completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.
C+	77-79	Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.
C	73-76	Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.
C-	70-72 (lowest grade to pass)	Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.
F	Below 70	Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.

Netiquette

Please observe the following rules of netiquette for communicating online:

- Remain professional, respectful, and courteous at all times.
- Remember that a real human being wrote each post and will read what you write in response. It is easy to misinterpret discussion posts. Let's give the benefit of the doubt.
- If you have a strong opinion on a topic, it is acceptable to express it as long as it is not phrased as an attack. Please be gracious with differing opinions.
- When upset, wait a day or two prior to posting. Messages posted (or emailed) in anger are often regretted later.
- Proofread and use the spell check tool when you type a post. It makes the post easier to read and helps your readers understand what you are saying.

Your instructor reserves the right to delete any post that is deemed inappropriate for the discussion forum, blog, or wiki without prior notification to the student. This includes any post containing language that is offensive, rude, profane, racist, or hateful. Posts that are seriously off-topic or serve no purpose other than to vent frustration will also be removed.

Credit Hour Policy

For this **10-week, 3 credit course** there will be an average of **approximately 11 hours** of combined direct instruction in the Blackboard classroom and 2-3 hours of independent learning per week. More information about GWU's credit hour policy can be found at [the Office of the Provost's Policies](#) web page (Under: Assignment of Credit Hour Policy).

University Policies & Services

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For details and complete code, see [GW's Code of Academic Integrity](#).

Copyright Statement

Unless explicitly allowed by the instructor, course materials, class discussions, and examinations are created for and expected to be used by class participants

only. The recording and rebroadcasting of such material, by any means, is forbidden.

The Copyright Act (17 U.S.C. § 10) governs the rights attributed to owners of copyrighted work. Under certain circumstances, educational institutions may provide copies of copyrighted works to students. The copies may not be copied nor used for any other purpose besides private study, scholarship, or research. Users should not provide electronic copies of any materials provided on this course's Blackboard site to unauthorized users. If a user fails to comply with Fair Use restrictions, he/she may be held liable for copyright infringement. No further transmission or electronic distribution is permitted.

University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays

In accordance with University policy, students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. For details see the current religious holiday policy on [the Office of the Provost's Policies](#) web page.

Disability Support Services (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services. They can be contacted by phone at 202-994-8250 or in person at Rome Hall, 801 22nd Street, NW, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information visit the [Disability Support Services](#) website.

Counseling and Psychological Services

GW's Colonial Health Center offers counseling and psychological services, supporting mental health and personal development by collaborating directly with students to overcome challenges and difficulties that may interfere with academic, emotional, and personal success. For additional information call 202-994-5300 or visit the [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) website.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is located in Gelman Library at 2130 H St NW in Suite 221 and they can be reached at 202-994-3765 or via email at gwriter@gwu.edu. You can [schedule writing center appointments](#), both in-person or by phone, in advance. Daytime and evening hours are available. Check for this semester's hours at the [writing center contact page](#). The Writing Center does offer Summer hours.

GWU Libraries

Off campus students have full access to all of the research resources, services, and assistance that the Library offers. The GW community has access to 500+ online subscription databases and to millions of items, electronic and print, in the library catalog. Off-campus students even have additional privileges because the Library will FedEx print materials to your home. For more information visit the [GW Libraries](#) homepage.

Call the Ask Us desk at 202-994-6048 or [contact someone at the library](#) to answer any questions. For questions beyond “Do you have this book/article?” and “How do I login?” use the website mentioned to make a research consultation appointment with a librarian. Librarians are there to guide students through any aspect of the research process, from selecting and narrowing a topic, crafting a research strategy to citation management.

Safety and Security

- **In an emergency:** call GWPD at 202-994-6111 or call 911
- **For situation-specific actions:** review the [Emergency Response Handbook](#)
- **In an active violence situation:** [Get Out, Hide Out or Take Out](#)
- **Stay informed:** review [notification tools for staying informed during emergency and safety related situations](#)